

Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
The New District Homeowners Center	2
Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005	2
Opening of Chinatown Community Cultural Center	3
Department of Parks and Recreation's Free January	3
District Activities	4
Community News	4
Upcoming Events	4

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

Health care has always been a priority for me as Mayor of the District of Columbia – and that hasn't changed.

As some of our readers know, on January 5, I signed an Exclusive Rights Agreement with Howard University President Patrick Swygert to proceed with the newest hospital for the District of Columbia – the National Capital Medical Center. The full package of legislation will be formally introduced to the DC Council in early February.

I'm proud to say that the National Capital Medical Center will help change lives for the better in the District of Columbia. It will provide access to sorely needed comprehensive medical services, including Level 1 Trauma for residents on the east side of the District, especially in Wards 6, 7 and 8.

Right now a senior living in Lincoln Park who falls and injures herself must travel 10-15 minutes or more by ambulance to reach Washington Hospital Center. A single mother whose child is choking may need to travel 15 or 20 minutes or more in the opposite direction to reach Greater Southeast Hospital for emergency medical care. With a new hospital on Reservation 13, these people will be just moments away from life-saving care.

The medical center will provide outpatient specialty and diagnostic services to residents on the east side of the city, where chronic illness is most concentrated. These services will complement the neighborhood-based primary care that is strongly supported through the District's Medical Homes Initiative. The vast majority of National Capital Medical Center patients will be covered through Medicaid, the Health Care Alliance, or private insurance.

The new hospital will also be an economic win for District workers. The Agreement commits Howard to award 50 percent of all construction contracts to local businesses. It is estimated that the construction of the center will create between 1,800 and 2,700 jobs – and ongoing operations of the center will create another 1,200 to 1,800 jobs.

I am confident that this public-private partnership will prepare the city's health care delivery system to deal with today's pressing health needs and tomorrow's medical challenges.

For a copy of the agreements, please visit: http://dc.gov/mayor/ERA_Execution.shtm



AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human
Services

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

The New District Homeowners Center

Last week I was very pleased to open a new District government center that will help homeowners in our city navigate our city government.

The center will serve as a resource to help homeowners get building permits more easily in the District. The Homeowners Center, run by the District's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), takes what used to be a complicated process for District residents and makes it simple.

When I was elected Mayor, I made a promise to our residents. I promised to revive our city government and make it more efficient and responsive to citizens. The opening of the Homeowners Center is not only another example of making our government more efficient, but of making government work – for residents across the District.

The Homeowners Center is a one-stop, state-of-the-art office that helps homeowners find out what they need to do to help make improvements to their home. Because a building permit is required for most home repair or renovation projects, getting a permit is one of the first steps. And we realize it's not always easy. But our goal is to change that.

The center, created by DCRA Director Patrick Canavan, will provide one-on-one customer service to help residents through the permitting process. That means residents can find out everything they need from the government to get their work done. It's a place where residents can get answers fast.

The DCRA's Homeowners Center is located in Suite 2102 at 941 North Capitol Street, NE. It is open to the public 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The Homeowners Center will serve homeowners by appointment and by walk-in. For more information on the center please visit www.dcrd.dc.gov



Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005

On January 10, I was pleased to sign into law a bill that will help grandparents across our city who are raising their grandchildren.

Under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, grandparents with legal custody or standby guardianship may be eligible to receive subsidy payments. The bill supercedes other states' measures for child care by focusing on the grandparent's income and providing financial support directly. Ultimately, the bill will help allow District grandparents to keep their families together.

So who's eligible? The answer is: Grandparents, great-grandparents, great-aunts, and great-uncles are all eligible. And how much is the benefit? The benefit will range from \$800 to \$1,100 per month with most grandparents and children qualifying around the \$800 level.

This law will be the first of its kind in the nation. It's a bold leap for our city. The fact that the idea for this act came from grandparents themselves underscores the importance of this initiative and the benefits it will provide. I'm very pleased that we can help District grandparents overcome some of their challenges and meet some basic needs as they care for their grandchildren. And I am proud that the District will lead the nation with this new program.

In the District of Columbia, there are more than 16,000 children living in grandparent-headed households (14.5 percent of all children in the state). More than 8,000 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.

Too often, benefit programs for children living without their parents are poorly designed. Some require that the children be placed in foster care or that parental rights be terminated. As a result, many grandparents struggle to provide for their family on fixed incomes. That's why this Act is such great news for the District – and I'm proud of it.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

Opening of Chinatown Community Cultural Center

January 7 was a terrific day for the Chinatown neighborhood of the District. On that day I joined a host of national and local leaders for the grand opening of the Chinatown Community Cultural Center – the first of its kind in our city and something we should all be proud of.

The Cultural Center is the brainchild of Chinese-American community leaders who worked with the Chinatown community, the local Penn Quarter and Shaw neighborhoods, as well as the District government. The goal of the center is to promote cultural literacy and enrichment among locals and tourists alike. It's all part of an effort to enhance the unique character of Chinatown.

The center will play a big role in restoring and preserving the strong Chinese-American identity of our historic Chinatown. Furthermore, it will serve as a forum to promote future development of the neighborhood.

It truly is a small jewel for our city – celebrating the wonderfully unique cultural heritage of Chinatown. It's something that we have a duty as government officials and community members to preserve. As some of our readers know, we've made incredible progress in recent years in revitalizing this area.

Just imagine: Six years ago, when I first took office as Mayor, Gallery Place was an entirely different place. What a difference a few years and a lot of teamwork makes.

Today, Gallery Place is a living, breathing, economic engine of jobs, commerce and activity – all in a transit-friendly urban city center that's growing by leaps and bounds.

In what was once an urban wasteland we now can see: The neon light of restaurants and retail. Soft lights beaming from condos. And foot traffic that looks more like Manhattan than what we once thought of as Washington, DC.

Thanks to development like this around the MCI Center, thousands of people have jobs – and millions of dollars in tax revenue is flowing towards key city services.

When you consider the neighborhood, just think about all the new development: Last year we opened the new Woolly Mammoth Theatre. This year, we've got the National Portrait Gallery reopening. A new Shakespeare Theatre is in the works, and the Newseum development is on the horizon nearby.

But in the midst of all this development, we are working very, very hard to preserve the unique history of our Chinatown. This center has been the result of a collaborative effort. That means community members, government and the private sector – all working in tandem toward a common goal.

Please visit the new center– at the Gallery Place Complex, 616 H Street, NW, Suite 201.



Department of Parks and Recreation's Free January

As our readers know, I'm deeply committed to the health and wellness of our residents. I try to exercise as much as possible.

But like everyone I have momentary lapses. So I was pleased to announce earlier this month that our Department of Parks and Recreation is offering complimentary membership for facilities with fitness centers from now until the end of January.

In this New Year, District residents have a chance to "make good on their resolutions" and enjoy recreation centers with workout rooms in their own neighborhoods. It's a great way to start off the New Year by committing to a healthy start.

It's also a great way to experience some of our wonderful new recreation centers across the city, which I've been deeply committed to building during my tenure.

DPR will also be offering free classes throughout the year at your local recreation centers. To find out more information about the complimentary membership and the free classes throughout the year, call (202) 698-2250.

Or, please visit our Web site at: www.dpr.dc.gov



District Activities



Mayor Williams delivered remarks during a student government forum sponsored by the Close Up Foundation. The forum was held at the Carnegie Institution in Northwest.



The District held its 21st Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration at the University of the District of Columbia. DC's Youth Mayor, Tyrell Holcomb of Woodson Senior High School, presented a proclamation on behalf of the city.

Community News

- [Mayor Promotes Free Memberships at the District's Recreation Centers](#)
- [Mayor Announces \\$3 Million Emergency Drug Assistance Plan for Elderly, Disabled Residents](#)
- [Mayor Williams to Be Featured on Food Network's *Iron Chef America*](#)
- [Mayor Williams Praises DDOT Director Tangherlini for New Appointment](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

1/15	African American TeaPraises 7:30 pm Room A-5 Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library 901 G Street, NW African American TeaPraises.com will host a tea honoring African Americans.
1/21	Job Fair 10 am – 3 pm Emery Recreation Center 5701 Georgia Ave., NW
1/22	Garveyism: Awakening in Washington, DC 6:30 pm Main Lobby Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library 901 G Street, NW Lecture will focus on the impact of Marcus Garvey on various civic, cultural and political organizations in Washington, DC.

